2011 discharge: EU general budget, European External Action Service

2012/2176(DEC) - 22/03/2013 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Budgetary Control adopted the report by Andrea EŠKOVÁ (ECR, CZ) in which it calls on the European Parliament to grant the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy discharge in respect of the implementation of the European External Action Service's budget for the financial year 2011.

Members welcome the fact that, on the basis of its audit work, the Court of Auditors concluded that the payments as a whole for the year ended on 31 December 2011 for administrative and other expenditure of the institutions and bodies were free from material error.

They note, however, that while 2011 was the first financial year for the EEAS, it is, however, fully responsible for the financial year 2011 and has to ensure strict compliance with the legislation. They urge the EEAS to examine what lessons can be learned from the first year of operation. They request that the EEAS, in the context of the 2012 discharge procedure, informs Parliament of the results.

Members note that at the end of 2011, the final budget for EEAS headquarters was EUR 188 million, with a execution rate of 91% and was EUR 276.1 million for the delegations, with a lower execution rate of around 89%. They are concerned that after an amending budget and some transfers from the Commission and within services in 2011, underspending and carrying over of appropriations continues to be quite high. Therefore, they suggest the development of **key performance indicators** to monitor the most critical areas in order to improve the budget execution over the coming years.

Other issues are highighted such as procurement, building policy, recruitment and the management of staff and **chronic absenteeism in the delegations**. In general, Members call for improvements to the quality of the financial and administrative management of Union delegations as well as certain services in the headquarters.

Lastly, Members urge the EEAS to maximise the benefits of economies of scale by creating new synergies within the EEAS headquarters and delegations as well as in cooperation with Member States and national diplomatic services, in the spirit of a true Union external policy and services. They emphasise the need for the Union to have a delegation in Panama.